



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH
*1102 SE Quince Street • PO Box 47990
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February 4, 2004

The Honorable Dave Quall, Chair
House Education Committee
John L O'Brien Building
2nd Floor, Room 232-B
P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, Washington 98504-0600

Dear Representative Quall:

We are writing to share the Board's support for House Bill 2955, scheduled for public hearing before your committee on February 4. We would like to respectfully request that HB 2955 be amended to include in Section 2 (b):

(viii) Sufficient funds should be designated specifically for school facility construction, maintenance, repair and renovation to ensure health and safe learning environments.

Many factors influence children's ability to learn and fulfill their greatest potential—one important factor is the health and safety of school facilities. For example, school indoor air quality and ventilation have been found to impact student achievement (information on healthy school environments, learning, and high performance schools is available at <http://www.edfacilities.org/pubs/outcomes.pdf>, <http://www.chps.net/overview/index.htm> and <http://cfpub.epa.gov/schools/index.cfm>). HB 2955 directs the task force to address funding issues around a variety of factors that influence learning, but those factors do not include school facility construction, maintenance, repair and renovation.

There is a clear need for stable, ongoing funding of emergency school repairs and renovation projects:

- The Board has heard from students, parents, teachers, local and state health department staff, and school district staff about indoor air quality concerns resulting from school facilities in need of repair.
- The Washington Attorney General's Office has documented school construction problems in "Administrative Recommendations: Investigation of School Construction and Electrical Licensing Activities (Eastern Washington and Clark County)," a September 25, 1996 memorandum.
- The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction received applications for the one-time federal emergency repair and renovation funds from 43 percent of school districts that describe repair and renovation needs across the state (please see <http://www.k12.wa.us/SchFacilities/ESRR.aspx#ProjInfo>).

The Board responded to citizen concerns and evidence that school indoor air quality problems are a statewide health and safety issue by reviewing the Board's school environmental health rule, chapter 246-366 WAC. During the rule review, concerned citizens, state and local health department staffs, school district staffs, and representatives of other organizations expressed the need for clearer rules, and also the need for stable, ongoing funding for quality school construction, maintenance, repairs and renovations. Based on this review, the Board decided to begin a rule revision process in July 2004.

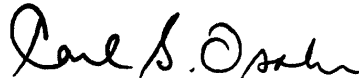
We hope that the joint task force proposed in HB 2955 examines funding issues mentioned above, and designs a compensation model that includes sufficient designated funding for quality school construction, maintenance, repairs and renovations. Washington's children and teachers would then be better able to learn and teach at their highest levels.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Linda Lake
Chair, Washington State Board
of Health



Carl Osaki
Chair, WSBOH Environmental
Health Committee

Dr. Ed Gray
Washington State Board
of Health Member

cc: House Education Committee Members
Washington State Board of Health Members
Mich'l Prentice Needham, Governor's Office of Health Policy
Terry Bergeson, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Steve Meyer, Department of Health